

STAT.

5

ASTRONAUTICS & AERONAUTICS January 1981

WASHINGTON SCENE...from the AIAA Washington Office

● CIA Deputy Director John McMahon, in testimony before a House Intelligence Subcommittee, estimated that the Soviet Union had spent \$200 million on propaganda and covert campaigns against NATO deployment of enhanced-radiation (neutron-bomb) weapons and the modernization of theater nuclear weapons.

Enhanced radiation weapons (ERW) increase radiation while greatly reducing blast (tenfold) and heat damage to surrounding areas. Made for use in short-range, tactical nuclear weapons such as the Lance missile and 8-in. howitzer, they would probably be used against large concentrations of Warsaw Pact tanks, a major threat to NATO.

The campaign against the neutron bomb began in the summer of 1977 and was manifested in a series of coordinated diplomatic moves, overt propaganda, and covert political action, said McMahon. It began in the Soviet and East European press and spread to communist international front groups all over the world. "The purpose of this front-group activity was to maintain the campaign's momentum and to draw noncommunists into the campaign, particularly in Western Europe. What had begun as a Soviet effort now appeared to many as a general public reaction to the alleged horrors of the neutron bomb," said McMahon.

By far the most important comments, said McMahon, appeared in the noncommunist press in the political center or on the left. "A segment of this press could be counted on to react almost automatically once the neutron bomb received attention in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Others in this group could be expected to react negatively for various reasons: anti-Americanism, doubts on NATO's viability, hope for maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union, or an honest distaste for the development of new weapons of mass destruction. For the Soviets the real propaganda success lay in the broad, adverse editorial treatment given the bomb by this second journalistic sector."

A second front was formed using direct contacts between politicians and organizations on both sides of the Iron curtain. "In late January 1978," McMahon continued, "every Western government announced that it had received a letter from Brezhnev warning that the production and deployment of the neutron bomb constituted a serious threat to detente....Western parliamentarians received similar letters from members of the Supreme Soviet, and Soviet trade-union officials sent letters to Western union organizations and their leaders." It was clear, the CIA official said, that the Soviets were focusing their attack on our NATO allies, who had to decide whether to accept deployment of the weapons on their soil.

Still other approaches were made at UN disarmament meetings, Soviet front organizations, and European Communist Party-sponsored meetings, said McMahon. One such meeting, the "International Forum Against the Neutron Bomb," organized by the Dutch Communist Party, drew 40,000 people from all over Europe.

While it is difficult to assess the full impact of the anti-neutron-bomb campaign, the Carter Administration in April of 1978 deferred production of the enhanced-radiation element of the warheads indefinitely while proceeding with modifications to the warheads themselves to make them compatible with ER components. In commenting on the results of the Soviet bloc campaign, the CIA testimony quoted the chief of the International Department of the Hungarian Communist Party, Janos Berecz, as saying, "The political campaign against the neutron bomb was one of the most significant and most successful since World War II." McMahon also noted that "the Soviet Ambassador to the Hague (Netherlands) at that time was subsequently decorated by the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) in recognition of the success of the Dutch Communist Party, under his direction, in organizing the high point of the anti-neutron bomb campaign."

With the neutron bomb temporarily defused, testified McMahon, the Soviet Bloc turned its efforts against the U.S.-initiated move to modernize the theater nuclear forces (TNF) by deploying the highly accurate ground-launched cruise missile (GLCM) and the Pershing II missile. Scheduled for deployment in late 1983, they will, for the first time, place targets on Soviet soil within range of NATO ground-based missiles. The purpose of the modernization is to minimize the risk that the Soviets might believe they could use their long-range weapons to make or threaten limited strikes against Western Europe without NATO being able to respond in kind.

The Soviet Bloc campaign used tactics similar to those in the neutron-weapon effort, McMahon said, including contacts with legislators, mass meetings, and a worldwide press and poster campaign. The posters, he testified, "adorned every block and wall in Western Europe." Some of the arguments used against modernization of the TNF were that the transfer of cruise-missile technology was prohibited under SALT II and that the TNF would undermine future arms-control negotiations.

Despite the Soviet Bloc efforts, NATO approved TNF modernization in December 1979, although the Netherlands and Belgium deferred a decision on whether to allow basing these weapons on their soil. The British government strongly supported TNF, but the leaders of its Labor Party have strongly opposed basing cruise missiles on English soil.

Another witness at the hearing described the types of contacts possessed by Soviet Bloc intelligence and their effectiveness in carrying out such campaigns. He was Ladislav Bittman, former deputy chief of the Disinformation Department of the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service. Bittman defected to the West after the Soviet invasion of his country in 1968. He gave an inside view of Soviet Bloc intelligence activities a decade earlier. His Disinformation Department had close contacts with West European media. It put out false stories for Western consumption, including forged documents. Forgeries of documents attributed to President Carter and Vice President Mondale were material at the hearings. Bittman's department also operated "agents-of-influence," high-level westerners who held key positions in foreign governments or media who would aid them in their mission. Bittman said he personally controlled several members of the West German parliament and a director of a national television network in a western European country. He also mentioned that the Czechs had several agents among